



Klamath Network Featured Creature

November 2007

Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)

FIELD NOTES:

General Description:

The Cedar waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) is a medium-sized passerine. Adult males and female of this species look alike. They have a brown crest and black face mask lined in white. This bird has a brown back with a pale yellow body and yellow or orange tipped tail feathers. The yellow coloration on the tip of Cedar waxwings' tails can vary with diet. Those who feed on the red berries of an introduced species of honey suckle in the northeastern states will often have orange tail tips versus the typical yellow. Males and females both have red, waxy appendages on their wing feathers that give this bird its name.

Behavior:

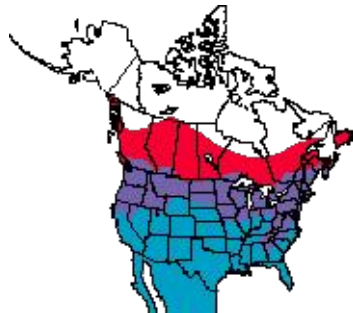
This species is very social. They often travel in large, tightly flying flocks making trilling noises to keep individuals close together. Males attract a female by doing a hopping dance and giving the female a food gift. She will accept the advance by giving the food back and doing her own hopping dance. Together, pairs build cup-shaped nests. While incubating, the male will bring food for the female. Once the eggs hatch, both parents will feed and protect the chicks.

Feeding

Their diet is comprised mainly of berries. Flocks will travel together until a berry patch is found and will not leave until the food source is exhausted. Cedar waxwings are also adept hunters and will often eat flying insects, as well as beetles and ants. These birds can survive exclusively on berries for many months and often do so in the winter.

Where to see it in the Klamath Parks:

You may see the Cedar waxwing in all six of the Klamath Network parks.



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Habitat:

Cedar waxwings prefer open forests and forest edges over dense stands. They are commonly seen in residential areas, orchards, or any other habitats that support fruit-bearing trees.

Distribution:

In summer months, Cedar waxwings can be found from central Canada to the central United States. This bird winters in the southern U.S. all the way down to into Central America. Many populations will stay year-round in the Pacific Northwest, moving locally to find food sources.

Status

Cedar waxwings' range has been expanding. With this, their numbers have also increased consistently over the past few decades. This bird often benefits from human development, as it frequently increases the number of berry and fruit-bearing trees. Cedar waxwings are protected under the U.S. Migratory Bird Act and it is illegal to keep one as a pet.

Additional Information:

For more information on the Cedar waxwing, please visit [Cornell University's All About Birds](#) site and [University of Michigan's Animal Diversity Web](#) site.